

## Lode Parish Council – Meeting Information for 13 December 2021

### Matters arising not on main agenda

Removal of brambles adjacent to Fassage Hall	Cllr Small/ Clerk	Truelink have been advised that brambles should be cleared 2m back from paths and basketball hard standing
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### Council Bank Accounts

Bank balances as at 9 December: £30,162.94

Receipts since 5 November: None

Allotment rents outstanding £ 67

### Planning

**Late application :** 21/01728/FUL -61 Lode Road, CB25 9ET

Single story rear extension with mono pitched roof and internal alterations. Garage conversion with removal of existing double doors to front and replace with matching window (retrospective)

**Application approved:** 21/01362/FUL – Aran, 66 Lode Rd, CB25 9ET

Front infill extension with new porch, extension of 1<sup>st</sup> flr loft space with dormers either side of roof. Conversion of garage to habitable space and demolition of existing conservatory–

### Correspondence

- Resident of Fairhaven Close – confirmation of agreement to tree planting
- Gtr Cambridge Partnership – Notice of meeting 18 November, 2 pm
- Gtr Cambridge Partnership – Launch of consultations on Eastern Access and Bus & Active travel
- ECDC - Rough Sleeping Survey
- ECDC - Precept Request letter for 2022-23
- Cllr Purbrook – Invitation to Community Working Group for Cambridge Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project, 2 December
- Cambs & Peterbro' Police & Crime Commissioner – Notice of online Virtual Roundtable for Local Cllrs, 10 Jan 2022
- CAPALC – Advance notice of County Conferences in 2022
- Neighbourhood & Community Safety Officer, ECDC – Newsletter
- A to B1102 Group – Letter re GCP Consultation
- ECDC – Invitation to Enhanced Response Area Webinar
- GCP – NE Cambridge Action Plan
- Gtr Cambridge Partnership – Notice of meeting 9 December, 2 pm
- 21/01524/RMA - Email from applicant clarifying boundary questions raised by the PC
- Natural Cambridgeshire Grant – Claim required to be made by 31.1.22
- Cllr Platten – Notification of Litter Picking on 6 Feb 2022 from 3-4 pm
- CCC – Christmas Holiday Activities and Food Programme
- Cllr Purbrook – Key points from CWWTPR Liaison Group 2.12.21
- ECDC – Business Growth Fund Grant Scheme

## **AGENDA ITEM 6a: 2022-23 Budget Issues**

**Introduction:** Linked to this paper is a spreadsheet indicating the performance against budget in the current financial year for the eight months ending 30 November 2020 together with a projection of income and expenditure for the remainder of the financial year. This provides a context within which to consider the development of a budget for 2022-23.

The key decisions to be made by the Council are: on what does it wish to spend its money and how will that money be raised?

This paper sets out key issues to be considered during the process for determining the budget for next financial year.

**Predicting expenditure for the remainder of this financial year:** This is quite difficult to do with confidence as the weather is a major factor in the amount of grass cutting required which is a major item of expenditure. I have tended to take a cautious view so it may be that the end result is better than predicted. I am forecasting closing bank balances of around £37,000 as compared with opening balances on 1 April 2021 of £42,456. The reduction is broadly accounted for by the commitment to spending £4,000 as part of the Fassage Green project and the costs associated with securing the new email, access to Microsoft 365 and a new laptop for the Clerk.

**Funding the Council's ongoing activities:** The Council takes responsibility for maintaining key parts of the village infrastructure, notably, the Recreation Ground, play area, allotments and cemetery. It also maintains some of the verges within the village. It raises funds for this by levying a precept which is collected by the District Council through the Council Tax paid by local residents. Additional income comes from a small grant from the County Council for maintaining verges, fees for burials and erection of memorials in the cemetery and rents for the allotments.

The District Council has just advised that there are 362.6 [359 in 2021-22] households in the village meaning that £362.60 would be raised for each £1 levied on a typical band D household. Historically, the amounts levied by Lode Parish Council falls within the lower range by comparison with its neighbours. Only three Councils within East Cambridgeshire levy lower precepts than Lode's £45.96 per household in the current year – the average precept for East Cambridgeshire in 2020-21 (the latest year for which figures are available) was £73.61.

A key issue for the Council is to raise sufficient income to ensure that it can maintain its current responsibilities. If the expenditure exceeds income the Council's reserves will be depleted and it may be difficult in future to increase the amounts levied through the precept by an amount which covers the shortfall.

The draft budget I am presenting indicates that it should be possible to sustain the Council's revenue commitments by increasing the precept from £16,500 to £17,000. The levy per household would increase to £45.96 which is 2% higher than last year. If the precept remained at £16,500 the amount levied per household would fall to £45.50

Allotment charges were reviewed during this financial year with effect from 1 October and in the current climate it is not essential to increase them for the next financial year. Cemetery fees are lower than those prevailing in neighbouring villages and the Council may decide to review them as part of the budget process.

**Community Infrastructure Levy:** The District Council makes a levy on new developments and passes on an element of this to the Parish Council. It must be spent on additions or improvement to local infrastructure. Lode Parish Council has received no CIL this financial year and has fully spent the allocations previously made.

**Fassage Hall and Recreation Ground Charity:** The Parish Council makes payment on behalf of the Fassage Hall and Recreation Ground Charity for some costs it incurs through the year. The estimated recharge to the Charity is £1,200 – about half the level for 2021-21. The reason for the reduction is that fixed payment to Octopus Energy, the Hall's electricity provider, was set at a level that built up a substantial credit balance. Given the risk of such amounts getting locked in when a provider gets into financial difficulty, I obtained a refund of £1,200 during the year which is due to the FHMC.

**Special Projects:** These are one-off items of expenditure to enhance the local environment and the amenities available to residents. The amounts showing under this heading for 2021-22 are much larger than usual reflecting the Fassage Green project funded by FCC. The forecast to the end of March assumes that the project will be completed within this financial year with all sums due to contractors and from FCC being settled before the end of the financial year. For the 2022-23 budget, provision should be made under this heading for schemes such as installing a new water supply to the allotments.

**Reserves:** As at 30 November the Council had balances totalling around £30,165. The spreadsheet anticipates income of £22,900 and expenditure of £15,900 up the end of the financial year which would project closing balances of around £37,000. (This figure will be increased by around £4,000 when the Council claims the remainder of its rebate for VAT incurred on expenditure during the year.)

In the Audit for 2021-22, the Council declared reserves as follows:

Unforeseen repairs	£5,000
Fassage Green Project	£4,000
Due to Cambs County	£1,000 (This is no longer needed as the amount owing for the Speed Indicator is now paid)
By election reserve	£2,000
Hall & Recreation Ground Dev	£10,500

The remainder, approximately £20,000, is designated as a general reserve.

The external auditor will seek information about the Council's plans for any reserves which exceed 1 year's normal revenue expenditure.

**Timescale:** The District Council have asked for information about the level of precept set by the Parish Council by Monday 17 January 2022.

**Recommendations:**

The Parish Council is recommended to:

- Confirm its plan for spending on both ongoing activities and special projects in the year 2021-22;
- Confirm how it will raise the necessary funds to carry out those activities with specific reference to:
  - The precept required for 2022-23 (it is recommend to raise this to £17,000);
  - Rent charged for allotments (it is recommended that these are not increased);
  - Cemetery Fees (it is recommended that these are reviewed);

- Amount to be transferred from the Fassage Hall Management Committee (estimated at £1,200)

Jonathan Giles, Clerk  
23 November 2021

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**AGENDA ITEM 12: Minutes of Human Resources Committee  
8 November 2021**

**Present:** Cllrs Crickmar, Purbrook & Small, the Clerk

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None
- 2. COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:** There were no items from the public
- 4. PROCEDURAL MATTERS**
  - a) Election of a Chair: Cllr Purbrook was elected as Chair of the Committee
  - b) Adoption of Human Resource Committee Terms of Reference: The Terms of Reference as approved at the Parish Council meeting on 11 October were adopted by the Committee
  - c) Future meetings: There was brief discussion about how these meetings can be open to the public alongside the requirement to keep some items confidential. It was noted that East Cambs do not appear to have a Human Resources Committee whilst Cambridgeshire County Council operate a system whereby the public would be able to attend such meetings by appointment rather than arriving on the day without notice
- 5. EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**
  - a) Appointment of committee members to undertake annual appraisal of Parish Clerk: It was noted that an appraisal would normally take place against a comprehensive job description (JD) and agreed objectives. In that context it was decided that work on developing the JD, together with Terms and Conditions, would take place over the next few months with a view to the appraisal being conducted in April.  
**ACTION:** Cllrs Purbrook and Crickmar in conjunction with the Clerk.  
**ACTION:** Cllr Small will forward examples of JDs produced by other Parish Councils
  - b) Identification of training and professional opportunities for staff and Cllrs in 2022 (dates and funding): Cllr Crickmar agreed to review the training and development opportunities available for Councillors through CAPALC and to publicise these with Council members
  - c) Identification of HR-related policies and procedures recommended for adoption by Parish Councils: It was agreed that this would be researched by Cllrs Purbrook and Crickmar together with the Clerk while developing the JD

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** To be arranged in April following the completion of the JD